"Truth Is One, Men Call It By Various Names." —RIG VEDA

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Message of the East

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CONTACT WITH REALITY

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel*
"Light shall come again from the East."
—*Tyndall*

VOLUME XLIV 1955 NUMBER 2

INNER FREEDOM

Author Unknown

Unevenness no longer troubles me.
Wealth is the same to me as poverty.
Illusion I have cast away,
Without my self I long to stay.
Myself I leave,
Who lives beyond his thought, he shall not grieve.

You ask how from illusion I withdrew
When perfect union in myself I knew.
Only that union is not vain
That takes the sting from love and pain.
Myself I leave,
Who lives beyond his thought, he shall not grieve.

Since I was drowned in depths, nothing could force
My lips to speech, I lost my very tongue,
Thus God into Himself has taken me.
Myself I leave,
Who lives beyond his thought, he shall not grieve.

Since now again my life is at its source,
I cannot age, I am forever young,
The gifts of earth have all forsaken me,
Their powers leave,
Who lives beyond his thought, he shall not grieve.

—*from the New Song of Inner Freedom*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

The soiled mirror never reflects the rays of the sun, and the impure and unclean in heart who are subject to *Maya* never perceive the glory of the Bhagavan (the Venerable). But the pure in heart see the Lord, as the clear mirror reflects the sun. Be holy then.

—Sri Ramakrishna

Never did eye see the Sun unless first it had become Sun-like. Never can the soul see Primal Beauty unless itself be beautiful. Therefore let each man become God-like and beautiful who aspires to see Beauty and God.

—Plotinus

If you give up your small self for the sake of others, you will not only find your real Self, but will also make others your own. The more you seek to save your little self, the more you lose your true Self and estrange others.

—Swami Virajananda

God protecteth the humble and delivereth him; the humble He loveth and comforteth; unto the humble man He inclineth Himself . . .

Unto the humble He revealeth His secrets, and sweetly draweth and inviteth him unto Himself.

The humble man, though he suffer confusion, is yet tolerably well in peace; for that he resteth on God, and not on the world. *—Imitation of Christ*

A perfect childlike simplicity puts us at once into intimate relationship with God, without any hindrance.

—L'Abbe de Tourville

It matters not if your task leads you to wiping My little ones' shoes; show the humility of self-forgetfulness, not self-depreciation. The Father opens His universe to care for the selfless soul. *—The Illimitable One*

CONTACT WITH REALITY

by Swami Paramananda

O Thou infinite, all-effulgent Spirit!

Thou art the Source of our being, the Giver of strength and wisdom!

Destroy all our darkness and ignorance, and unfold within us Thy Light, that we may see with understanding mind.

Thou art our Resting Place!

Grant us that we may find our rest and relaxation in Thy Presence.

Thou knowest our innermost being;

Thou knowest all our needs!

Make us pure and make us free!

O Thou Compassionate Spirit, grant unto us Thy loving protection and keep us ever in peace!

Peace, peace, peace be unto us and to all living beings!

Our greatest strength lies in our inner spiritual conviction. By this I do not mean our religious faith, our belief. What we believe signifies very little; it is what we have gained directly as the result of our own deeper experience that counts every time. Such direct conviction is not difficult to acquire. We make it difficult through our attitude of mind. For instance, the natural tendency of the majority of people is to believe that immediate access to higher Truth is only for certain privileged souls, that not everyone can expect to have conscious contact with his spiritual Source, but must rather depend on someone else for his salvation. That is a great mistake. We are all, without any exception, descendants of the Almighty Infinite One.

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Of course, that Eternal One may seem to us to be enshrouded in darkness. Our habits of life and of thought have so covered our mind with the dust of the finite that it is difficult for us to believe that we have any spark of Divinity within us. We must for that reason uncover our mind and find access to our true Being. For only then shall we have strength to open up our spiritual path, fulfill our obligations and meet all the demands of material life. We owe this to ourselves, to our own souls, for "man does not live by bread alone," as Christ's great saying goes. Here bread signifies not only material food and all that pertains to it, but clothes, drink, little physical comforts and personal gratifications as well. None of these is enough to satisfy and complete our life and our life's aspirations. We need to go to the Source of life and existence in order to find greater joy, greater strength and added power for doing and being.

The Source is ever open to us. In fact nothing lives apart from It. A tree, no matter how high it has grown, has to draw from its root. Unless it does that it dies. Same way with human beings, no matter how much they have accomplished physically and intellectually, in order to survive, in order to express life and be sustained by life, they must learn to draw from their true Source, their basic root. All spiritual studies, all religions, all dogmas and rituals and forms and philosophic studies tend toward that goal. Unfortunately most of us miss it. We think that Truth is contained in a formula or a creed. It is contained only in man's life. We are, however, given suggestions, thoughts and teachings that are inspiring and helpful, in order that we may find Truth directly for ourselves, unlock the gate and enjoy the treasure. If we cannot do this our life must invariably

remain barren and unproductive, no matter how it may appear on the outside.

Is it not a fact that often we hear someone say with a sigh and a sense of burden, "The more I possess, the more trouble I seem to have!"? The reason we want to have more is because we think that greater possessions will bring us more joy, more freedom, more happiness and peace. But it is not the accumulation of things, it is not materiality that can ever satisfy our inner life and the hunger of the soul. We cannot afford to lose our sense of values.

In order to keep our life in balance and perform our duties well and effectively, we need the higher guidance, and that guidance we can always receive. It is ours by divine birthright because it comes to us from that unfailing Source from which we have descended. Our thoughts and prayers and aspirations should all be directed toward That, toward keeping ourselves connected with That. Some people may do this in one way and some in another, but sooner or later we all have to establish connection with the main spring of our life, the great reservoir of all existence. It is this which keeps us sustained; it is this which gives us the power to do for ourselves, to meet the emergencies which arise and the problems of the world which might otherwise overwhelm us.

According to our knowledge of this inward Source is our power to act wisely and to serve well. To serve well means to serve with love. Through love and service we are able to contribute our share more effectively to the common good. Thus gradually is our life made complete.

You may ask, "How is one to gain realization of this spiritual Source?" We must reach out for it, each one of us in his own simple way. The main thing is earnestness.

Our prayers do not need to be prayers of fine words. Words are of very little importance. In fact you do not need to utter any word. If your heart is full and sincere and your thoughts are deep, verbal utterance is not necessary. We may give loud voice to our appeals, but if they are devoid of genuine feeling and sincerity, they do not reach the Altar of Truth.

We owe it to ourselves to cultivate a sense of spiritual Presence and to keep the inward avenues open which connect us with our Source. Sometimes unconsciously we draw from that Source and sometimes we are able to draw from It consciously. When all else fails we can always turn to that unfailing One. But let us not think that we need to turn to God only when everything else has disappointed us. That is a poor way to do. We should not wait until an emergency arises before calling on the Higher Power. At all times we should seek to strengthen our life so as to be in rhythm with It, and keep our inner channel open so that no matter when or how we need the Divine support, we can always reach unto It. In good circumstances we should turn to that Source and also in bad circumstances. Before undertaking anything we should look to That for guidance.

Too often we have missed our goal through being carried away by emotions, excessive joy or excessive grief. Our vision is clouded by these self-created conditions, by our own thoughts and feelings. In order that our mind may reflect the spirit of Truth it is needful for us to keep it surrounded by an atmosphere of purity and peace, in which there is no place for trivial and petty thoughts, thoughts about things which do not concern us and are alien to our best good. When the mind is thus centered at a high point, it becomes like a crystal and has the power to give pure vision.

Vision is born when we combine thought and action prayerfully, harmoniously with our inner Ideal. Then that which today seems so far removed from our consciousness becomes a natural expression. For the dedicated soul, it is as natural to turn to that inward Source for strength and sustenance as it is for a child to go to its mother whenever it is in trouble. Companionship with the Supreme Spirit, the Infinite One is the real support of our life. Yet surrender to that unbounded Spirit never makes us feel that we are insignificant, worthless, sinful creatures, but on the contrary fills us with the consciousness that we are truly part of God.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This is not merely a pronouncement, an empty command impossible to fulfill; it has a profound meaning relating to our true nature. It means that we all have at the root of our being an inherent perfection, and that until we are able to express that perfection through our life, through our thoughts and actions, we are not realizing our divine destiny.

We want power, we want success, we want unbroken happiness and peace, not only for our own benefit but for the benefit of others; but in order that these may come to us and manifest through us, we must prepare the channel for their free expression. This means tuning ourselves by means of holy thoughts, pure thoughts, kind thoughts, thoughts full of service and humility, and above all, thoughts which lift our minds to a loftier realm of consciousness. These are the thoughts which enable us to see and to know. When we see and know deeply, spiritually, then real conviction comes. For spirituality is a matter of seeing and knowing and not just of theorizing.

All religions emphasize the idea that through silence,

through prayer, through undivided attention, the soul may put itself in rhythm with the Ideal and flow out to It in an unbroken stream of devotion. Nothing expands our life and consciousness more quickly than does the feeling of real devotion for the Deity. Other thoughts and desires may give us momentary satisfaction, but they do not enlarge our consciousness as does genuine love of Truth and higher aspiration.

Love always brings life into our being. Do you not find that whenever you are full of love for anyone, you feel exalted, stronger, more capable in every way? Also have you not found that the opposite emotion of hatred never fails to bring contraction and a sense of bondage to all the ills which afflict the mind and heart of man? Hatred deprives us while love endows us, and this is especially true when our heart is consecrated to the Divine.

Whenever we are able to bring our heart close to the Cosmic Heart, to that Love which knows no limitation, we are infilled, our life force is renewed and our strength increased. That is why devotees never feel any lack. Just see the difference between the man who works or speaks through mere intellectual calculation, and the mystic soul who depends on the Inner Source for his expression. The man of outer learning has always to measure and calculate concerning what he is going to say and what he is going to do, while the mystic draws from an inexhaustible supply which ever comes to him in answer to his need. He becomes a channel for Divine benediction which flows through him out to the world of men. How does he make himself such a channel? Through love, through uniting his heart with the Divine Heart. When the smaller heart unites with the greater, the smaller disappears. Whoever is able to love in a selfless way receives great

blessing through it, deeper understanding and an ever-renewed strength. But when we forget the Divine Principle in us and allow our vision to become clouded through mean or hateful thoughts, then we rob ourselves of this consummation.

Actually, according to the light of wisdom there is not any real difference between what we call Divine Love and the love that ordinarily flows through our hearts to humanity. It is the same love, but it becomes a permanent factor in our life only when we have sanctified it through our devotion to the Ideal.

We all have heard of the fabled Philosopher's Stone, by touching which a base metal is turned into gold, a gold that remains unaltered even when the Philosopher's Stone is taken away. So with the human heart. Once it is touched by that Philosopher's Stone, the Cosmic Being, it is at once remolded, refashioned, transformed and can never again be hateful or harmful or detrimental to any living thing. A man who reaches this point no longer needs to calculate as to how he may perfect himself; but before that point is attained, he has to be on his guard and prove the earnestness of his feelings and the sincerity of his desires.

There is no use, for instance, in talking about the great ideal of brotherhood, if by our actions we fail to prove our conviction in regard to it. If it is a real passion with us we shall seek to manifest it in all our relationships. In our spare moments we shall be thinking about it and planning how it may be brought into practical expression, and as a result we shall realize it as a living truth in our own hearts. So if we are full of yearning as to how we may give our heart to God, how we may learn to love Him so that through our being His love may flow into

the world, if this is our passion, if this is our constant longing, then these lower instincts which harass us and war against us will not survive for very long. They may rise occasionally because of past habits and associations, but when they receive no encouragement from us they will soon dwindle away and finally disappear.

As we feel the Presence of the loving God within us, and our hearts are inspired by that Presence, words die on our lips and the power of the Spirit pours into us like a great flowing river washing us clean and pure of all stain. That is the way to love God. When we really love Him we cannot hate anyone. There is no room for hatred in our hearts. Hatred is impossible. We no longer say one thing and do another. We must prove our faith by our life, for otherwise we are hypocrites. When we have an Ideal we must think of It and meditate on It, and never stop until It has become for us a reality. In this way we shall discover how through the divine element within us, we are able to feel love both for God and for humanity. We shall discover Its power and discover how It brings us everything that is good, expands our life and fills our heart with joy.

Should we not then seek to approach It from every angle? Whatever may be the occasion, should we not seek to bring in this God Principle, that there may be no darkness anywhere? I think we shall find that it is a very simple thing to do. We shall find that it is easier to love than to hate; although at first we may believe that it is not natural for us to love all and forgive all, and have that transcendental attitude which marks the sages and the seers of Truth. We shall think that it is impossible really to forgive one who has deeply offended us or harmed us, and that the natural thing is for us to strike

back. But the time comes when our higher nature tells us that we belittle ourselves when we do so. When we speak a harsh word to someone because he has spoken harshly to us, we lower ourselves beneath our own standard and create more harm than good. Moreover, it leaves a stain on our mind and consciousness, difficult to wipe off.

But these experiences do not come to those who have the feeling of adoration for God, or whose hearts are really filled with sincere desire to serve the Truth. They do not even need to fight against the baser elements. Their very bodies become responsive and pliable to their Ideal as was the case with Sri Ramakrishna, the great saint of modern India, whose physical body refused to do anything contrary to his holy instincts. It automatically recoiled from all that in his sight was impure or unkind.

It is not the fault of the body that we do not realize an exalted Ideal. It is the fault of our intention. Our aspiration and our spiritual devotion determine whether or not we are rightly resolved and have the image of Truth in our soul.

Prayers, hymns, supplications, study of Bibles and rituals to a certain extent may be beneficial, but not by merely following the regular forms of religion do we elevate ourselves. It is the feeling within that stirs us and gives living reality to all these acts, so that through them we become aware of the Presence of Deity and make others aware of It.

God has no need, the Infinite Spirit has no need, of anything from us, but we have great need of His benediction and His love. If we have anything alien in our nature, that Divine Love cannot flow through us. This means that whenever we hold any thought contrary to the Divine Ideal, we turn our backs upon It and cut ourselves

off from Its protection. We may say all kinds of things in self-justification but we merely delude ourselves when we do so. God, the Supreme Father and loving Mother of the universe never denies us anything. He is ever ready to give to us, but we are not always ready to receive. He is ever ready to heal our wounds, to fill our needs, but we do not know how to go to Him. Seldom do we even know that we can go to Him. Doubt, scepticism and all such things have taken hold of our hearts, thus depriving us of the greatest of all blessings—union with the Supreme.

We must try to cultivate this living devotion. There is no human being who is deprived of love. We all feel love for something or someone. We may not all admit that we have love in our hearts, but nevertheless we have, and whatever way we express that love, it is a spark of the Divine Love. It comes from a Source that is inexhaustible. The more of it you give, the more flows into you. When you really experience its endless bounty, you feel freer and are no longer afraid of giving.

Our first duty, therefore, as we struggle to study and meditate, is to seek to unite our heart with the Infinite Heart. He who succeeds in blending with that Heart becomes transformed. All his blemishes are removed and he well nigh represents that Divinity in the world around him. When by means of our devotion we thus become one with our Ideal, then that Infinite Being works through us, loves through us and has power to bring help to those who have need of it, and blessing to those whose hearts are open to receive it. Should not this then be the aim of all human endeavor—the goal of our existence?

. . . It is impossible to live one way and pray another.
—William Law

ALL FOR THY SAKE

by Srimati Gayatri Devi

(An address given at the Temple of the Universal Spirit, La Crescenta, California, January 2, 1955)

Coming together in prayer is really coming home to the Great Spirit whom some call Mother, some Father, others Friend, Companion, or Guide. The real significance lies in our power to feel close within ourselves to the One Who is all love, in Whose protection we ever are and Whose touch fills us with gladness. Let us come home now to that One like little children, and, if we must be adult, with care, self-consciousness, weight of anxiety, let us bring everything to that One, and lay our burden before Him, unburden ourselves by trusting, by letting go of the non-essentials. Let us gain that peace and freedom which await us at this very moment.

O Thou ever-present One, grant us light that we may behold Thee.

Quicken our spirit that we may feel Thy living touch.

Lift us above ourselves, enfold us with Thy love.

Make us clean of all the impurities of thought and desire.

May Thy Love take possession of our hearts, Thy Spirit subdue our self.

Make us one with Thee.

May we be worthy to be close to Thee.

Thou knowest our need; even our unformed thoughts and desires are revealed to Thee.

To Thee we surrender our all.

Accept us, exalt us, make us wholly Thine.

Peace, peace, peace be unto us and to all living beings.

This afternoon has a quality which you have created by your own devotion and earnestness. It gives me the desire not to preach a sermon or expound philosophy but the desire to gather you together and help you feel and know and touch what seems so very tangible to me.

We have read in the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna that Swami Vivekananda was so tortured by his own conflicts and doubts, his own uncertainties regarding religious matters, that he came to Sri Ramakrishna and asked him a straight-forward question. He said, "Sir, have you seen God?" Perhaps such a question may even suggest insanity to the Western mind, but never in India, because seeking of God and finding Him has really been India's vocation through the centuries. So, when this question was put before Sri Ramakrishna, he answered directly and said, "Yes, my son, I have seen Him as realistically, as tangibly as I see you standing before me, and if you so desire, I will help you to see the same."

I do not want any of us to gather from this that Sri Ramakrishna was suggesting any form of psychic or occult experience. We know that we have within us certain undeveloped faculties by which we could be exposed to the subtle realms of existence. We could see the things that we do not ordinarily perceive with our mortal sight. There are many planes of existence. We live in a mysterious universe and much that is subtle is hidden from us. By the cultivation of certain faculties we can become sensitive to visions, to comprehensions which are not ordinarily revealed to us; but seeing God as a true religious understands it is not seeing an apparition of any sort. It is primarily an inner experience.

We all know that in life, in our own existence and in the existence that surrounds us there is something intan-

gible, not perceivable to the senses. This is something which we know to be true, something in which we believe, but we do not have any personal experience by which we can say: "I have seen this," or even that "I have felt this." At the same time we are aware of our own possibility of seeing and knowing and feeling.

Now, when Sri Ramakrishna said, "Yes, I have seen and I will help you to see," all he was trying to convey to his disciple was that man is endowed with that innate devotion which eventually gives him the sight with which he can see. Christ did not say anything different from what Sri Ramakrishna said. He put it in this form: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Christ was speaking of a condition that is necessary for seeing. Now wherefrom does this purity come? Do we not all have it? And if we have it, then why is not our experience the same as Vivekananda's or Sri Ramakrishna's or Christ's or that of any human being who stands not really apart from us but who is essentially like us? And yet they seem to have something that we have not yet found or touched. The difference lies merely in our power of giving ourselves to a search, to a way of life, to a certain experience through experiment by which we can come to the seeing, and it is through our experiment that purity is achieved.

At the moment we do not have that condition of purity by which we can say, "I do see, and I know that I see, and I know that It is real."

You ask the true religious whose whole secret of life is love of God. He will tell you with utmost honesty that he is not deceiving anyone. He knows and, therefore, he speaks with certainty and authority that for man there can be that experience of seeing and feeling and knowing.

He knows that man, through his own choice, his aspiration and volition goes toward what he wants. Through that higher drive all the obstacles on his path are removed; the imperfections and that lack of purity which hide the vision are removed. We must try to understand this as outsiders, because most of us could not claim to be the type of religious who is completely given to the search for God. But, as outsiders, we must also realize that we need not remain outsiders, because we have the same possibilities; and someday if that religious urgency is felt within us, and if we are quickened and we have the power and capacity to give ourselves, then we will have the same experience. Then we can say, "Yes, blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." We will know by our own life that the purity has been achieved, and because of that, seeing has been possible.

All this leads up to what I want to say on the subject of consecration. If there is in man that sense of urgency for religious life, true inner life, which means life in God, he will come to a point when he would want to have the sense of consecration. He will cultivate that feeling by which he will give all of himself without reserve.

I think some time ago, one summer in Cohasset, I gave a talk on the "given life." You can give yourself completely without any reserve, without keeping anything back. That giving of yourself becomes your real directive in your personal life, and that is true consecration. I think all of us, without any exception, are consecrated in a certain manner. Even in our human relationships the feeling of sacredness enters in. Some people are consecrated to their vocation because in human beings there is the innate love of the highest ideals, and they want to make all relationships beautiful through that love of the ideal. So we

could not say that consecration is purely an act which awaits us when we can feel the religious urgency within us. With the religious there is the one clear and single direction. A true religious is so conscious of God in the real way, not superficially, that he wants all of himself, every part of himself, to be directed toward that ideal of God. And when that sense is awakened in him, then he, of his own desire, gives his body, his mind, his heart, his desires, his will, everything, over. That is the "given life." And when that happens, we do not have a sense of anything belonging to us.

We must recognize with all honesty that we primarily live for ourselves. It is the fulfillment of our own self, our own desires, and our own objectives and ideals. They may be mixed with idealism but still it is ourself that we want to express always, and all our joys and sorrows are involved in this fulfillment or the frustration of this self. Whereas with the truly consecrated it is never the self that is seeking expression. It is something else. The consecrated is aware of the One to Whom his life is consecrated; and therefore, whatever he does he wants that to be the expression of the One Whom he loves and seeks first.

In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, with which most of you are quite familiar, there are these verses in the ninth chapter: "Whatever thou doest, whatever thou givest, whatever thou eatest, the austerities thou performest, O Son of Kunti, do that as an offering unto Me." If only we could think of our own life as an offering, as something that is given and that we, ourselves, make the gift! No one forces us to do this, remember that. There cannot be any life of consecration without volition, without choice, without a singleness of purpose by which we know that that is the

life we want and because we want it we choose it for ourselves. If we are quite clear in this matter of giving, then we lose the desire to make any compromise. We cannot say, "I will give this; I will keep this back. This is for me and this is for the Most High to Whom my life is given." We cannot do that. It must be all or nothing, and it is when it is all that we realize how our most insignificant existence, insignificant life, suddenly becomes a magnetized thing. We, ourselves, become vibrant and alive because something else enters into us through our very giving. And this each one can do according to his own understanding and his awareness of the One to Whom he consecrates himself.

When we partake of food, always it is "I" that is standing first. Thus, I am eating, I am giving it to myself, I am satisfying my desire, satisfying my taste, because we have body consciousness. Now, reverse this; when the true spirit of consecration is born, there is never "I" even in our physical habits. Certainly the body has to be fed, it has to be nourished, it has to be kept; but let us keep it not for our sake, but for the One Who might use us, to Whom we have given our life.

There is one instruction that made a very, very deep impression on me. It is personal and I would like to share it with you. It was at a time when I felt a tremendous zeal within myself, passion, because I had taken up spiritual life. I felt that nothing I could do was too much. I must just forget myself completely, work as hard as I could and drive myself, so to speak. We have within ourselves this power of intensity. So I think I was losing my balance a little bit, going to the exteme, and I had a little talk with Swami Paramananda, our teacher. He explained to me very, very gently, the importance of taking care of the

instrument. He spoke of the body being the instrument and our own self being the instrument, and this was his illustration. He said, "If I placed in your care a little child, you would feel responsible for that child; you would want to take care of that child for me. You would not want any harm to come to it; you would see that in every way it was protected and loved. Learn to think of yourself in the same way. This does not belong to you. Your life of consecration makes this life not yours any longer. It belongs to Him, but take care of it for Him; do not abuse it, nor disregard its need, not for yourself but for His sake."

Here is the altered viewpoint. We can be extremely self-centered, "Oh, I am so important; Oh, I must eat right; I must have proper recreation; I am so important, so valuable." If you stop for a single minute, you know there are millions of us in this universe. We are coming and going; we are not really so very important. But the real importance comes when we realize that there is sacredness in our life because it is life, and by living and by being we could express something.

Sri Ramakrishna always spoke in parables. He gives this illustration of the one and the zeros. He said you can have one zero and two and three and four and five and six and keep on adding, and still they will have no value; they will still be so many zeros without any worth. But put a figure one before the one zero; instantly it becomes ten. Put it before two zeros and it is a hundred; before three, it is a thousand, ten thousand, a hundred thousand. So, whenever you put one before a zero then the zero has value and worth. In the same way, he says a life which is separated from the One, divided from the One, does not have the same worth as when it is related to the One.

Here is the true sense of worth that enters into us through consecration. Certainly our life has worth. It is sacred; it is meaningful, not because we can satisfy all that our desires claim, but because we can really accomplish something. The thing that is most important in the life of the true religious is the accomplishment of God's will. That is of paramount importance, and for the sake of fulfilling that will, a given soul can do anything. He can endure hardship; he can sacrifice personal pleasure and happiness; he can let himself be completely thrown aside. He can do anything.

Now, what I say is based on what we know to be true. When we have that sense of affiliation with God, we feel that in no way we can be either mistreated or neglected and that life cannot be wasted. Nothing can be done which is wrong. And that is the reason you will find that in the lives of those who have not only found that relationship but have been established in that relationship, there is this infinite courage and strength and stamina. In the book of Job you read, "Though he slay me yet will I trust in Him." Just think what courageous words they are: He can slay me; still, will I not lose my faith in Him. Everybody wants to live. Who wants to be slain? Who wants to be destroyed? Compare your faith with such faith. Self-pity enters in whenever we are confronted with difficulties or problems or tests, let us call them. "God is merciless to me; He is cruel!" we say. But if we have once understood the real meaning of consecrated life, we cannot say that any more. Anything can be done to us and we shall still say, "All right."

It is then we appreciate what Sri Ramakrishna said: that we must be like the dry leaf in the face of the wind. We live like that leaf, have no weight. A gust of wind

will come and blow it from one place to another; it can blow far from the tree from which it fell; the leaf always goes, goes with the wind; it never resists. That is the spirit. It is in our own tested life — because life is going to be tested — that we must give proof of our consecration. We have always that sense within us that no part of our being is unrelated to the spiritual path. Often we draw the line, we divide our everyday life from our spiritual life. This is not necessary. Within ourselves we can find the harmony.

I truly believe that you do not have to be drawn out of the world into a cloister in order to live a dedicated life. You can live a consecrated life in the world if your own motivation is right, if your ideals are always before you, if you do not lose sight of the Real.

One of my favorite passages of the *Bhagavad-Gita* is the one that appears in the twelfth chapter, "With mind and intellect dedicated to Me, he who is thus devoted to Me is dear to Me." This is *my* mind, this is *my* talent, *my* accomplishment; always we are trying to boost ourselves. That is what we do when self is what we want to serve, guard, protect, express; but when the reversal takes place it is never "my" intellect, "my" mind, "my" happiness. It all becomes "Thou" and "Thine." Ordinary life ceases to be ordinary; it becomes the unusual life through the very act of consecration because then that mind, that intellect, that self, that spirit are going to be used; and the one who is going to be used cultivates within himself that consciousness.

The sum total of spiritual life is in the cultivation of the consciousness. Something is happening to us, within us; and that something is happening to our consciousness. We are not revolving around ourselves anymore; we re-

volve around something else. It is then, you see, that we find that blending harmony between our religious instinct which makes us more mystical, and our humanitarian instinct by which we express the love of man. They are not separate. Christ said, "If ye have done this unto the least of my children, ye have done it unto me." That is His injunction; and absolutely there is no difference between the teaching of Christ, the teaching of Vedanta, or the teaching of any great teacher. They are all one and the same: "For My sake do this; if you do this and do it for Me, you are doing it unto Me directly." That is what happens when we cultivate the consciousness of the Divine and when we feel dedicated to the Divine. Then when we serve man, it is not just man we are serving because he is man. Sometimes we shall be incapable of serving man because his own ingratitude and imperfection will drive us away from him. It is true. Have you not said, "I do not want to have anything to do with that person; I've tried to help him and all I get from him is abuse!"? When you come to your senses, however, you realize that no matter how many times he fails, you do not want to fail, because you have an inner obligation, not to him but to your own ideal. What you do for him or to him, you are not doing just for him as a human being; you are doing it for Him, for the sake of your ideal. That is your moral and spiritual obligation, and with that foremost in your heart, what difference does it make whether or not he reciprocates, appreciates or understands? As long as you can do your best, can give your best, can express your best for His sake, that will be sufficient unto you.

In this way you gain detachment from the fruits of your own actions. Then you become really independent,

and that state of utter independence within yourself is attained through the life of consecration.

It does not matter who fails. Who does not fail? It does not matter as long as we live up to our own ideal. Our consciousness becomes removed from man and the non-essentials of life, and becomes so fixed on our ideal that we do not want to turn our gaze away from it, for we know that if we do we shall fall and lose our perspective, our vision and our understanding. That is one way of seeing God as a result of pure-heartedness. When you can keep on doing your part through loving kindness, through service, through giving of yourself, irrespective of what is done to you, then you can say you are living for the Highest.

Perhaps you will tell me that this is too much for us to expect of ourselves. Certainly it is; but we have the liberty to falter, and we will falter many times, because we are human. We have not yet reached that state of strength whereby we become infallible so that we cannot fail. Let us stumble! It does not matter. We shall also have to take that into consideration. Our failures should never arouse in us self-pity or self-depreciation, because they are expressions of the ego. One who lives for God, dedicating himself completely, he has such humility that he can accept his own disappointment in himself graciously and start from where he failed. He begins anew. That is what we have to do all the time with the assurance that we are neither punished nor judged, nor cast aside, nor are we deprived of divine help merely because we fail and falter. Always there is ready help for us. A devotee will tell you, a real religious will tell you, that God never forsakes him; he is never the forsaken of God. In his dark night, through which he also

must pass, he might, for a fleeting moment, feel fear or become disheartened or know despair. But it is only for the moment, and then his courage returns to him.

There is a very interesting little incident found in the life of Swami Vivekananda, who was the foremost disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the pioneer Vedantist to bring India's message to America. In his youth he was a very stormy soul; he had suffered so deeply — in fact all through his life he had suffered. He had many conflicts that he had to transcend. It is said that at one time he knew such deep depression (and this will give us encouragement) that he felt he had accomplished nothing, and there arose in him a suicidal tendency.

Let us take heart from this. When even a great soul, an illumined soul, can pass through such an experience, then there is hope for us all. He was in darkness. A shadow had fallen upon his consciousness. Feeling he was a failure, he wanted to do away with himself. But suddenly, in a flash, a voice rang in his ears, "What right do you have to take that which does not belong to you? Your life does not belong to you; it is mine." It was the voice of Sri Ramakrishna, his teacher, speaking to him.

In a moment of desperation we may feel as Swami Vivekananda did. We may think, "It is my life. I will do whatever I want with it. I will throw it away. I have the right!" But when the feeling, the conviction, comes; "It is *not* my life; it belongs to Him. I have no right over what is not mine!" at once all our despair vanishes. That is what I want to say to you. We do belong. Every soul belongs to the One from Whom he comes. Even in his darkest moment every one can realize his connection with that One and assert his right to the divine protec-

tion. With this realization, that our life is not ours, we should guard our life, cherish our life, use our life and give our life.

The more we give, the more we find is given to us. There can be no instinct, I think, as exalting, as expanding as that instinct to give of oneself, even to spend oneself. Thereby we become the instrument and understand the voice of the mystic when he says; "O Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Love; make me an instrument of Thy Peace!" "O Lord, let me give my whole being unto Thee!"

The first quotation is from St. Francis, the second, from Swami Paramananda, but we find in them the same tone, the same feeling, the same sentiment, the same emotion, the same drive. Let us not forget that you and I are also made of the same substance. We are not different from those whom we call great or saintly or more spiritual than ourselves. We are living souls; we are a tangible part of that great Whole. All we need to do is to hold to that awareness, that consciousness, and by keeping ourselves related to the Whole, gain the capacity, the increasing capacity, to give ourselves for the expression of the Whole.

All peace and happiness in this world depend upon unreserved self-oblation to God. If this be hearty and entire, the result will be an unfailing ever-increasing happiness, which nothing can disturb. There is no real happiness in this life save that which is the result of a peaceful heart. The soul which gives itself wholly and without reserve to God, is filled with His own Peace; and . . . the closer we draw to our God so much stronger and more steadfast and more tranquil shall we become. —*Jean N. Grou*

THE WHEEL

by Dick Whittemore

[The following poem is not merely the result of a poetic imagination and a flair for mysticism. It is born out of degradation, bitter suffering and final transcendence. Dick Whittemore for years was a confirmed alcoholic with all that implies of broken lives, inner disintegration and total despair. Finally, when suicide seemed to him the only means of escape, a saving hand was held out to him. He made contact with Alcoholics Anonymous. Even then the struggle was not ended; the way back was long and painful; but through the aid of a "Power greater than himself" and the never-failing help of his A. A. associates, he became reestablished in normal living.

It was at this time that he first came to the Ananda Ashrama at La Crescenta and showed immediate interest in the Vedanta philosophy, which also teaches one to invoke a Power greater than the little self. His friendliness and winning smile drew every one to him, but few realized the torment which had led this tall, charming young man to seek so earnestly for Truth.

One Sunday he came to the Temple all aglow. A large firm had offered him a job with a future. The past was being blotted out; the present was bright.

Then, suddenly, disaster struck! He came down with polio and for weeks he lay in an iron lung, his life in the balance. Day and night his physical suffering matched his mental and emotional suffering of the past. But he did not waver; he did not complain, and the shadow of death gradually withdrew.

When it was all over, Dick found himself permanently tied to a wheel chair. Those who saw him in those days can attest to the unfailing courage and even gayity he manifested at all times. He knew that his one great enemy was conquered—nothing else mattered.

Now he is living in New England, reunited with the wife and children he had lost through his years of darkness and servitude. From there he writes of happiness, peace and useful employment.

We have ventured to give his story, because we know he would be glad to have us do so. For he tells it himself from pulpit and platform, driven by a desire not only to help other alcoholics, but also to urge all men to attain their true birthright—realization of that "Greater Power" which some call Truth and others, God. His own victory, however, is more eloquent than any words.—EDITOR.]

Wandering,
All my life I've wandered—
My mind and thus my feet—
Across the land
And across the sea.
Seeking or running?
Ever restless, always moving!
Why?

Have I found what I sought?
Or am I tired of running?
This moment has its answer;
I understand:
The Infinite and Absolute,
No beginning, no ending,
A perfect circle.

The world is round
And motion is a wheel.
Thus I have returned,
Yet all is different.
Now, understanding,
Darkness fades into light,
Misery into joy,
Hate into love.
The circle complete:
Point of origin,
Point of destination,
One and the same.
Escaping, seeking,
The same circle
The same wheel
The same point.

Life is motion
And motion is a wheel.
Escaping or searching
We wander
In heaven
Or on earth.
My spoke is up or down.
It must turn.
On rocks or in sand
It rumbles or it sinks.

The wheel
Is well balanced;
All the spokes
Carry the same load.
The rim takes a pounding
Regardless.
The way is inward.
The hub moves slower.
The axle is strong.
There, surely, must be God.

On the rim
There is force
From above and below.
But toward the center
The circle is smaller,
Force of opposites weaker.
There in the center
Heat and cold,
Joy or pain,
All one and the same.

Around this
All life must revolve.
The rim and the hub!
I sought the answer
At the top of the rim.
The wheel turned;
I came to Earth again
With a curse.
The extremes—inevitable laws—
Up and down,
Round and round,
No answer.
But there
In the center
Is He,
Neither up nor down,
Nor on the side.

Now, I must leave the rim
And move in.
Sometimes up,
Sometimes down,
But I'm moving in.

The wheel turns slower.
The outward pull
Has weakened.
The spoke is strong.
I can reach the hub.
There I shall be close enough
To know the answer to the riddle.

The hub turns,
There is motion—life.

The center is motionless.
Around it all revolves,
Yet none affects.
Absolute, Infinite,
Neither life
Nor death.
He *is* cause and effect,
Word and thought,
Creator.
There, there,
In the center!

O, restless one,
Stop your spinning!
Come away from the edge,
Look within,
Into your heart.
It's more peaceful there.
The opposites cannot touch you there.
Neither light nor dark,
Nor space, nor time,
Nor bodily senses exist there.
"Be still, and know!"
Peace, Peace, Peace.

Know the All-pervading One . . . in Whom all the parts of a man rest like spokes in the nave of a wheel, so that death cannot hurt or trouble thee. —*Upanishads*

The Lord dwells in the heart of all living beings, causing all beings to revolve as if mounted on a wheel. Take refuge in Him with all thy heart. Through His grace thou shalt obtain supreme peace and the eternal abode.
—*Bhagavad-Gita*

THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM

by Esther Orlander

"For the beginning of Wisdom is desire of discipline;
and the care of discipline is love of Her."
Wisdom of Solomon—Apocrypha

It may be said fairly, I think, that as a people we Americans have certain undeniable virtues; it must likewise be admitted that we have our equally undeniable faults. Moreover I think it must be agreed that our outstanding fault is actually the one of which our critics most often accuse us: we are an undisciplined people. It is true. Ignoring our virtues for the moment; ignoring the moral presuppositions that must by all rules of moral logic underlie the positive and constructive pare which we have, in so large a measure, played in world affairs; ignoring all this, I repeat; it is true; we are an undisciplined people. I refer you to the daily newspapers across the length and breadth of this land for corroboration and evidence.

We can not and we do not deny this unpleasant truth about ourselves. And we try to change it. Indeed we do. (When "ourselves" means the rest of the population exclusive of "myself," that is.) We spend millions of dollars; we put numberless committees of investigation to work, equipped with all the aids that science and psychiatry can supply; we organize projects for betterment on every level of society; we are not unmindful of the individual social misfits nor of the under-privileged groups. With what result? Is it not primarily merely to discover that the cause we have uncovered in any case and tried to correct turns out to be not a cause in any "root" sense, but just another set of symptoms of

what still continues to remain our unsolved social and moral riddle: why do we so often, in such great numbers, behave so abominably?

Our critics frequently say it is because we are "immature," that as a people, collectively and individually, we have not "grown up." In a whimsical mood I am at times inclined to agree with them in a very literal and elementary sense. When I look at some of our embattled movies, especially the so-called "Westerns;" when I listen to the "tough American" live up to his character in a radio performance; when I sit in on one of those lawlessly adventurous television episodes which enthrall so large a part of our population at all hours of the day, I find myself wondering if it actually is not a presupposition of those who supply this entertainment — and perhaps a valid one — that the vast majority of us have not, in very truth, outgrown the wild, frontier environment of the childhood of our nation, and that lurking in the depths of each American personality is a residual frontiersman, a perennial, two-gun cowboy — highwayman.

Whatever may be the validity of such whimsies, they do not, of course, meet the accusation of "immaturity" head-on. Let us face it in a more realistic, a more philosophically searching mood. To be "immature" is to be not fully developed. Not "fully developed" in what? Surely none can say that as a people we are not developed in intelligent, practical know-how. Quite the opposite is the fact. We are keen, we are quick, we are extremely practical; we are clever, ingenious, inventive — phenomenally so. No; we are not immature in know-how. We are also naturally shrewd in seeing our material opportunities and in taking advantage of them. That is

why we have all the wonderful gadgets; that is why we are so luxuriously comfortable in this country; that is why, indeed, we have so much money.

And yet, we can not deny it, the accusation fits: we are immature. Immature in what, then? We have always found ourselves equal to any task, physical or intellectual; problems have, as a matter of fact, been our particular delight, whether practical or most abstrusely theoretical. Yet, in spite of all our cleverness, in our lives both as private individuals and as a collective society, far, far too often we manifest an immaturity of behavior that is not merely deplorable but tragically so. And it is not that we are totally ignorant of the reason; it is not that we do not know the direction in which to look for the answer to our question. Few indeed are those who are not capable of pin-pointing this "immaturity" of ours with at least the accuracy of that academic generality which we hear stated so ofen: we are immature in wisdom. But therein lies our folly: it is and it remains just that — an academic generality, and one which we are far too inclined to brush off as a collective abberation rather than to accept as a personal problem for whose solution we are personally responsible. Until we do so accept it and, furthermore, until we assume toward its solution the same concentrated mind-set that we are in the habit of assuming toward all other problems which captivate our deep interest and in whose solution we take great pride, the mere academic recognition of the problem will get us nowhere. We shall continue our blundering, hit-or-miss staggering in our un-wisdom and continue to delay our coming of age as mature human beings, suffering unceasingly the consequences of our ignorant folly. And, more than that, we shall postpone,

who knows for how many countless milleniums, the achievement of that ultimate spiritual maturity which is our final and supreme goal and destiny.

Let us face our problem, then, with honest minds and, with integrity of purpose, bend our wills toward its solution. Let us begin with the most obviously essential analysis: what is meant by that abstraction we call wisdom? Most people are aware that there is a difference between knowledge and wisdom. But do we have a full and complete comprehension of the distinction between the two? Do we automatically sense the implications that inhere in the term "wisdom" which need not qualify "knowledge," per se, at all? The answer, of course, is no. To know what wisdom is, is to be wise. And we are not wise. Our problem resolves itself then into this: what does it mean to be wise?

Let us follow our familiar intellectual procedure: let us look in a book. Since it is a definition we want, let the book be a dictionary. We find that Webster says: "Wisdom is the ability to judge soundly and deal discriminatingly with facts, especially as they relate to life and conduct."

This definition has been at our service for a long time. How far on the path to mature behavior could it justly be expected to have taken us? Wisdom is "the ability to judge." Wisdom is more, then, than just information, more even than any specialized knowledge or skill. These may be involved; certainly there is nothing in the definition to hinder it. They may, in fact, be a presupposition of wisdom, but they are not its essence.

Of specialized knowledge we have a phenomenal abundance. In modern times it has brought us a staggering number of discoveries; but it certainly cannot be said

that with each of these discoveries has come a built-in, fool-proof wisdom-formula for the best possible use of the discovery. Our discoverers of knowledge, our scientists, have, so to speak, dumped their discoveries, their brain children, in our laps. "Here they are," they have said, in effect. "We have discovered them for you; now they are yours. How you use them, what you do with them, that is your problem." In some instances, as we so well know, we therefore stand holding in our hands gadgets which give us the power of life or death over countless people. We do not comprehend them; we do not need to comprehend them. All we need to know is how to press a button, how to pull a lever, the gadget does the rest. It is in such crises that we need wisdom: "the ability to judge soundly and deal discriminatingly with facts, especially as they relate to life and conduct." The moments are not always so publicly dramatic; there is many a tense moment of decision in our personal and private lives. But whether they be public or private, individual or collective, it is in such moments that we manifest for good or ill our maturity or our immaturity, our wisdom or our lack of wisdom.

In a certain sense we may think of wisdom itself as a skill; not as a narrowly specialized skill, but as a skill which involves the total and synchronized conduct of our lives. In the moment of decision, the moment of action, which in the final analysis is the moment of "judgment," the critical question is: how much wisdom-skill do I have at my disposal? In other words, at a particular moment of crisis what is the total culminating essence of all my life's experiences on all the levels of my being: in thought, in feeling, in action? How practiced have I become in the art of living, first with myself, then with

other people? Which implies the deeper question, the more specific query: to what degree have I perfected myself in unselfishness? in tolerance? in patience? in thoughtfulness? in generosity of spirit? in genuine love of my fellows? To what extent have I achieved a state of peace and poise within myself? These questions are all preliminary. Together their answers constitute my present philosophy of life. And I know for myself, we all know for all ourselves, that my actions, all our actions, in great and in small, will be as wise or as unwise as is our dominating philosophy of life, no more so and no less.

Yes, wisdom is a kind of skill. How much routine drill work have we done in the honest effort to form habits essential to that skill? Have we acquired the habit of intelligent discrimination: the technique for distinguishing quickly and unerringly between the important and the unimportant; between what is ultimately desirable and what has only passing value, whether in thoughts, feelings or in actions; between what is constructive and what is destructive for others as well as for ourselves? In short, can we quickly discriminate and choose, at all times, between the positive side of life, where the virtues reign, and the negative side, where all the infinite gradations of ignorance and evil are in control?

There may be those who, reading this, will think it superfluous for me thus to emphasize the ordinary a, b, c's of what most of us recognize as ethical behavior. But when I look abroad and when I look within myself, I realize that few indeed are those among us who have so perfected ourselves in the "wisdom skill" that we no longer need to review the basic principles. From first to

last, in the spiritual evolution of man, the essential technique is to destroy every negative tendency of our lower human nature and to replace it with an habitual positive tendency which leads in the direction of our highest nature which, as in time we shall come to see, is divine.

To change habits, be they physical, mental or emotional, is a matter of discipline and practice. In the final analysis, the only discipline that is effective to this end is self-discipline. External discipline, however, cannot be escaped. This is a truth which our law-breaking generation is loath to accept. At certain stages and in certain aspects of our lives, either as individuals or as members of social groups, we must bend to an imposed discipline. If to no other than that of Nature herself! She is indeed our sternest and most unrelenting disciplinarian. It is well to remember, however, that external discipline is necessary only where self-discipline is lacking, and fails exactly where self-discipline breaks down. Hence, the absolute necessity to recognize a meaningfulness in imposed discipline and, by so doing, making it in essence, self-discipline; for only as such does it become truly and fully effective as a positive factor in our soul growth.

Most of us think we are fully aware of these familiar concepts. "Of course we believe in the need for self-discipline," we say. It is certain that we believe in it for our neighbors. But is there a single one of us who, in some area of his life, doesn't insist upon being a law unto himself? We call these little fenced off areas in our personalities our "personal idiosyncrasies." Sometimes, to be sure, they may be as harmless as we like to think they are, but then again, even in otherwise very

good people, they can be serious stumbling blocks not only to ourselves whose "pets" they are, but also to those who have to associate with us and put up with our annoying "pets." The day may come when they turn upon us, alas, to rend and destroy us.

By way of example: life is indisputably happier and more effective for everybody who comes in contact with us if we are able to adopt a positive, optimistic rather than a negative, pessimistic attitude toward people, toward our work, toward all the conditions and circumstances that surround us. Stating this as a rule of ethics, I might say: it is my moral duty to myself and to my neighbors to live always in the positive and never in the negative aspect of my nature. The discipline involved is to combat, to frustrate, to destroy, in my thoughts, words and actions, all weak, negative, gloomy, happiness-destroying tendencies whenever they crop up.

Life, we sometimes say, is a game. In fact it is told to us, in all metaphysical seriousness, that it is a game of the gods. If that is so, then to the extent that we can identify ourselves with the gods, we can make it our game too. This is a thought worthy of deep reflection; but on a more mundane plane, we know that it is a common characteristic of all games that they are played, so to speak, inside a field and within rules. In every game there must be "chalk-lines." The play stops when someone goes out of bounds, or when someone breaks the rules. I remember reading or hearing this story which makes my point, I think. A group of young men were playing a game of cards. During the play they carried on a discussion about God. One of the youths was especially skeptical. He pooh-poohed what he termed the irrational, unproved status of some of the statements

that were made about the nature of God. It came his turn to play. "You say God is omnipotent," he exclaimed, throwing his hand of cards down on the table. "Can He beat this ace of trumps?" Irreverent? But what a beautiful point it makes. The rules of the game once fixed, it becomes impossible to disregard them and stay in the game. A circle, to use Spinoza's illustration, cannot disobey the laws of the circle and remain a circle; it cannot suddenly manifest the properties of a triangle, for instance. Thus are the laws of nature, the laws of life, fixed. God Himself does not break His own laws.

What I am saying is that a willing acceptance of discipline is the essential basis for successful living; and by successful living, I imply spiritual growth; for the purpose of life is to evolve spirit. Let us not ever forget that fact. It is this long range view of our ultimate goal that eventually gives us an undeviating sense of direction on the path of our human striving. But he who would see must first open his eyes. Our eyes are heavy lidded, but let us strive to open them. And this is the purpose of discipline: to help us open our eyes. For just as enthusiastically as the boy who aspires to a place on the team accepts the rules of the game, must he who aspires to a well-lived life, to say nothing of a perfected life in the spirit, accept and follow the appropriate disciplines. I say "disciplines," for man, in his total being exists on several planes of being, each of which has its appropriate discipline, and all of these must needs synchronize and harmonize for his complete unfoldment.

Up to a point we are all quite ready to recognize the need for discipline in our lives. We know, for example, that if we wish to be successful in any of the arts it is essential that we obey the disciplines of the art we are learn-

ing. No one becomes a pianist, for instance, without intense practice in the accepted techniques of piano playing. We have no illusion that in any department of the intellectual life there can be significant progress without most rigid mental discipline. And yet when we enter the areas of moral, religious, and spiritual living we do not always seem to be quite so convinced that an identical technique is necessary here, and we are much more slow to realize the folly of trying to side-step the rules of discipline.

Why is this so? Is the reason that when we are trying to function in the realm of morality and religion, we are working, so to speak, in the frontier areas of our evolving souls? We are, perchance, either near or at the boundary which is the line of demarcation between our lower, physical, solely human selves and our deeper, higher, more complete and true spiritual selves. Is it that, in this relatively unfamiliar area, we are not so sure of ourselves? We do not seem really to comprehend our objectives as we did when we were merely developing body and mind. It is obvious that we need to become oriented; our terms need to be re-defined, for they have suddenly achieved a new, a deeper, a profounder significance. We feel quite confident that we know, for instance, what constitutes wisdom on the ordinary plane of physical and mental behavior. But in morality, in religion, that is, in the spiritual aspect of our lives, do we know this at all? It is important that we should, for we cannot call ourselves mature unless we have achieved maturity on every level of our being. And the most important level, because it is the highest, is the spiritual level. The culmination of all our growth is in our final spiritual unfoldment. It is only when, in the course of the gradual unfoldment of our lower faculties of body and mind, this spiritual awakening to our still higher

powers and capacities dawns, that our gaze becomes fixed on our true goal, and our progress begins to evidence the same intensity of purpose that hitherto it has evidenced on the lower levels. And there are those who have achieved! It is they, the seers, who have successfully trod the path, who are able to assure the rest of us, whose vision, perchance, is too dim to see the goal, of the validity of the guideposts along the way. It is they who can teach us the subtler techniques of the higher disciplines.

They can make clear to us, for instance, the importance of religious and spiritual discipline. When the average person hears that phrase he is quite apt to think at once of all the "thou shalt nots" of the church. He is aware of an uncomfortable feeling of repression. Certainly this is true of most young people. To most of them "religion" and "religious discipline" are the names of the sum total of all the things, mostly pleasant, which one may not do.

And this idea of theirs is not unwarranted. The word "religion" itself means a "binding back." And anything that binds, in whatever sense it does so, does, in truth, imply a set of regulations to be accepted and obeyed. When human nature is chronically undisciplined it does not like the idea of being "bound" in any sense whatsoever. That is not necessarily a condemnation of religion or even of the church, per se. There is no religion on earth which does not have its inflexible principles, its implacable "thou shalt nots." And whatever religion one may embrace one soon discovers how serious a business it is to ignore them. Our ten commandments, for instance: if one really wants to become aware of their validity, one needs only to become aware that one is breaking one of them. In due time one learns, indeed, that they have a validity that has nothing to do with the priest or the minister or the deacons of the church as an institution.

There are, however, many right-minded, high-minded individuals who have an earnest desire and a real determination to live to the extent I have indicated, a moral and even a religious life. It is fortunate for the nation, fortunate for the world, that there are so many. They have taken the concept of wisdom, as our best human minds have evolved it, to heart. To them it is indeed "the ability to make sound judgments and to deal discriminatingly with facts, especially as they are related to life and conduct." To them this definition has profound moral, even religious implications. In any case, to exercise wisdom is, they feel, to act at all times as a man among men; to manifest, in the highest degree, man's human dignity.

And this, in answer to our question, it can probably be said, is as far as Webster's definition of wisdom can be expected, on its own merits alone, to have taken us "on our path to mature behavior." But there comes a time sometime in man's mundane experience that this ideal, high as it most assuredly is, is not high enough to satisfy his sense of his own capacities. There comes a time, in his progressive advance, when his horizon is so widened that he sees this little finite self of his as the infinite Being, the divine Reality that in its very truth it is. Suddenly this little behaving and misbehaving mortal man that walks the earth becomes merged in his vision of something so great, so divine, so blissful, that willingly to let go of this vision of his true self becomes henceforth to him an impossibility. Man's consciousness at such a point in his development, is flooded with a yearning to repeat and to hold as a permanent realization this glimpse of what he recognizes as his true being. All the human heaviness, all the inertia, all the negativeness of his ordinary human self is a drag, a chain binding him to his lower na-

ture; and this chain actually can be cast aside! The truth dawns in his consciousness that he himself can free himself; there is a way! He can escape from the prison of his narrowly bound self into the freedom of his ultimate maturity: his true spiritual being.

But the way? What is the way? The way is Wisdom! Eternally, on every plane, be it of body, mind or spirit, the path to maturity, to perfection, is the path of Wisdom. The path through the realm of the physical and the mental is not unduly strange; we comprehend its landmarks. But the spiritual realm, that is beyond our ken! What new connotations does Wisdom take on here?

It is true: the realization of spirit does involve a kind of transmutation; but it comes about quite in the order of nature to him who has faithfully followed the path of Wisdom so far. It comes in the form of an awakening to new and ultimate distinctions, hitherto undreamed of. On the human, the mundane plane, as we follow Wisdom's path we live according to Wisdom's dictates; we discipline ourselves to, we exemplify Her qualities. That is, we are kind, we are truthful, we are loving. On the plane of spirit which in a most literal sense is the plane of realization, we are not merely kind, we become kindness itself; we are not merely truthful, we become truth; we are not merely loving, we become love. In thus becoming the qualities of Wisdom, we become Wisdom Itself. And in becoming wholly identified with Wisdom, we become wholly identified with God, for the two are one and the same.

Love of God then, becomes identical with love of Wisdom. On the level of human striving, love of Wisdom becomes identical, as Solomon puts it, with "desire of discipline." The idea of God embraces the idea of every hu-

man virtue. To realize our identity with God, therefore, we must of necessity identify ourselves with His virtues. To be truthful, to be kind, to be patient, to be loving in an ultimate sense, we must in our own beings *become* truth, *become* kindness, *become* patience, *become* love. This is the divine transmutation: a meaningless enigma to the unawakened, but the sole meaning of existence to those who have discovered that this is the ultimate meaning of that "maturity" to which the path of Wisdom leads, the ultimate goal of the human soul.

St. Augustine once gave, as a formula for perfect Christian living, this simple directive: Love and do as you like. This sounds like religious anarchy, doesn't it? It is indeed subject to such misinterpretation by one who regards the permissive part alone, the "do as you like," and disregards the injunction that conditions it, namely to "love." He who realizes the full implication of that injunction is perfectly safe to do as he "likes." For he who truly loves has become love; he is incapable of deviating from its nature. He who has become perfect in love has become perfect in Wisdom; he cannot act unwisely. Such a one can safely do as he "likes."

To one who has reached this point on the path of growth toward maturity of soul, the whole human concept of wisdom has thus become identified with the Reality of Spirit which alone *is,* and which therefore is his own veritable Reality. His human efforts to achieve wisdom have become identified with his aspiration and effort to achieve this identification with that toward which he aspires. And what is the secret of achievement? Discipline; unfaltering discipline. There is no other way.

> "The man of steady wisdom, having subdued the senses, becomes fixed in Me, the Supreme."

"He who looks upon wisdom and the performance of action as one, he is the true Seer."

Thus taught the ancient Vedic Seers, milleniums ago. Their teaching still remains the prime lesson of all our earthly experience. We can never reach the full stature of our humanity without following the dictates of Wisdom; and we can never reach our ultimate spiritual destiny, which is to become one with God, without becoming one with Wisdom. And he who would become one with Wisdom, must love Wisdom; and he who would love Wisdom must desire discipline, for the "care of discipline *is* love of Wisdom," and the love of Wisdom is the love of God, and perfect love of God is identity with God. This is the Way, the logical Way, the Only Way to that ultimate maturity which is the flowering of our beings, not merely in the likeness of the Divine, but in identity with Divinity Itself. And "the beginning of Wisdom is desire of discipline!"

The *yogins* of all ages fought with the magic armor on, in a spirit of complete self-surrender, not in the interests of their narrow selves but in the interests of the Self of all mankind, and by so doing they left humanity purer, holier, nobler, stronger. They are the salt of the earth. They were called upon to play their parts on a vast stage; ours may be an infinitely narrower one, but the Master of the stage is the same. The area in which they moved was very large; ours may be very small, but the center, round which we have to perform the divine dance, is the same. We have to sacrifice ourselves — our petty and narrow and circumscribing selves — in order to be one with the Self . . . All sacrifice, no matter how small or great, provided it is pure, reaches Him.

—*Mahadev Desai*

THE MISSION OF VEDANTA

by Swami Vivekananda

There are times in the history of a man's life, nay, in the history of the lives of nations, when a sort of world-weariness becomes painfully predominant. It seems that such a tide of world-weariness has come upon the Western world. There, too, they have their thinkers, great men; and they are already finding out that this race after gold and power is all vanity of vanities. Many, nay, most of the cultured men and women there, are already weary of this competition, this struggle, this brutality of their commercial civilization, and they are looking forward towards something better. There is a class which still clings on to political and social changes as the only panacea for the evils in Europe, but among the great thinkers there, other ideals are growing. They have found out that no amount of political or social manipulation of human conditions can cure the evils of life. It is a change of the soul itself for the better, that alone will cure the evils of life. No amount of force, or government, or legislative cruelty will change the conditions of a race, but it is spiritual culture and ethical culture alone that can change wrong racial tendencies for the better. Thus, these races of the West are eager for some new thought, for some new philosophy. The religion they have had, Christianity, although good and glorious in many respects, has been imperfectly understood, and is, as understood hitherto, found to be insufficient.

The thoughtful men of the West find in our ancient philosophy, especially in the Vedanta, the new impulse of thought they are seeking, the very spiritual food and drink for which they are hungering and thirsting. And it is no wonder that this is so.

I have become used to hearing all sorts of wonderful claims put forward in favour of every religion under the sun. Let me . . . lay before you my reasons why I think that it is Vedanta, and Vedanta alone, that can become the universal religion of man, and that no other is fitted for that role. Excepting our own, almost all the other great religions in the world are inevitably connected with the life or lives of one or more of their founders. All their theories, their teachings, their doctrines, and their ethics are built round the life of a personal founder from whom they get their sanction, their authority, and their power; and strangely enough, upon the historicity of the founder's life is built, as it were, all the fabric of such religions. If there is one blow dealt to the historicity of that life, as has been the case in modern times with the lives of almost all the so-called founders of religion (we know that half the details of such lives is not now seriously believed in, and that the other half is seriously doubted) if this becomes the case, if that rock of historicity, as they pretend to call it, is shaken and shattered, the whole building tumbles down, broken absolutely, never to regain its lost status.

Every one of the great religions in the world excepting our own, is built upon such historical characters; but ours rests upon principles. There is no man or woman who can claim to have created the Vedas. They are the embodiment of eternal principles; sages discovered them; and now and then the names of these sages are mentioned, just their names; we do not even know who or what they were. In many cases we do not know who their fathers were, and almost in every case we do not know when and where they were born. But what cared they, these sages, for their names? They were the preachers of principles,

and they themselves, so far as they went, tried to become illustrations of the principles they preached.

At the same time, just as our God is an impersonal and yet a personal God, so is our religion a most intensely impersonal one, a religion based upon principles; and yet it has an infinite scope for the play of persons. For what religion gives you more Incarnations, more prophets and seers, and still waits for infinitely more? The *Bhagavata* says that Incarnations are infinite, leaving ample scope for as many as you like, to come. Therefore if any one or more of these persons in India's religious history, any one or more of these Incarnations, and any one or more of our prophets are proved not to have been historical, it does not injure our religion at all; even then it remains firm as ever, because it is based upon principles, and not upon persons. It is in vain to try to gather all the peoples of the world around a single personality. It is difficult to make them gather together even round eternal and universal principles. If it ever becomes possible to bring the largest portion of humanity to one way of thinking in regard to religion, mark you, it must be always through principles and not through persons. Yet as I have said, our religion has ample scope for the authority and influence of persons.

There is that most wonderful theory of *Ishta,* which gives you the fullest and the freest choice possible among these great religious personalities. You may take up any one of the prophets or teachers as your guide and the object of your special adoration; you are even allowed to think that he whom you have chosen is the greatest of the prophets, greatest of all the *Avataras;* there is no harm in that, but you must keep to a firm background of eternally true principles. The strange fact here is, that the

power of our Incarnations has been holding good with us only so far as they are illustrations of the principles in the Vedas. The glory of Sri Krishna is, that he has been the best preacher of our eternal religion of principles and the best commentator on the Vedanta that ever lived in India.

The second claim of the Vedanta upon the attention of the world is, that of all the scriptures in the world, it is the one scripture the teaching of which is in entire harmony with the results that have been attained by the modern scientific investigations of external nature. Two minds in the dim past of history, cognate to each other in form and kinship and sympathy, started, being placed in different routes. The one was the ancient Hindu mind, and the other the ancient Greek mind. The former started by analyzing the internal world. The latter started in search of that goal beyond, by analyzing the external world. And even through the various vicissitudes of their history, it is easy to make out these two vibrations of thought as tending to produce similar echoes from the goal beyond. It seems clear that the conclusions of modern materialistic science can be acceptable, harmoniously with their religion, only to the Vedantins, or Hindus as they are called. It seems clear that modern materialism can hold its own and at the same time approach spirituality by taking up the conclusions of the Vedanta. It seems to us, and to all who care to know, that the conclusions of modern science are the very conclusions the Vedanta reached ages ago; only, in modern science they are written in the language of matter.

This, then, is another claim of Vedanta upon modern Western minds, its rationality, the wonderful rationalism of the Vedanta. I have myself been told by some of the best Western scientific minds of the day, how wonderful-

ly rational the conclusions of the Vedanta were. I know one of them personally, who scarcely has time to eat his meals, or go out of his laboratory, but who yet would stand by the hour to attend my lectures on the Vedanta; for, as he expresses it, they are so scientific, they so exactly harmonize with the aspirations of the age and with the conclusions to which modern science is coming at the present time.

Two such scientific conclusions drawn from Comparative Religion, I would specially like to draw your attention to; the one bears upon the idea of the universality of religions and the other, on the idea of the oneness of things. We observe in the histories of Babylon and among the Jews an interesting religious phenomenon happening. We find that each of these Babylonian and Jewish peoples was divided into so many tribes, each tribe having a god of its own, and that these little tribal gods had often a generic name. The gods among the Babylonians were all called Baals, and among them Baal Merodac was the chief. In course of time one of these many tribes would conquer and assimilate the other racially-allied tribes, and the natural result would be, that the god of the conquering tribe would be placed at the head of all the gods of the other tribes.

Among the Jews the gods went by the name of Moloch. Of these there was one Moloch who belonged to the tribe called Israel, and he was called the Moloch Yahva, or Moloch Yava. In time, this tribe of Israel slowly conquered some of the other tribes of the same race, destroyed their Molochs, and declared its own Moloch to be the Supreme Moloch of all the Molochs. And I am sure most of you know the amount of bloodshed, of tyranny, and of brutal savagery that this religious conquest en-

tailed. Later on the Babylonians tried to destroy this supremacy of Moloch Yahva, but could not succeed.

It seems to me that such an attempt at tribal self-assertion in religious matters might have taken place on the frontiers of India also. Here, too, all the various tribes of the Aryans might have come into conflict with one another for declaring the supremacy of their several tribal gods; but India's history was to be otherwise, was to be different from that of the Jews. India was alone to be the land of all lands of toleration and of spirituality, and therefore the fight between tribes and their gods did not long take place here. For one of the greatest sages that was ever born, found out here in India even at that distant time, which history cannot reach, and into whose gloom even tradition itself dares not peep—in that distant time the sage arose and declared, *Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti,* He who exists is one; the sages call Him variously. This is one of the most memorable sentences that was ever uttered, one of the grandest truths that was ever discovered. As for us Hindus this truth has been the very backbone of our national existence. For throughout the vistas of the centuries of our national life, this one idea, *Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti,* comes down, gaining in volume and in fullness till it has permeated the whole of our national existence, till it has mingled in our blood, and has become one with us. We love that grand truth in every vein, and our country has become the glorious land of religious toleration. It is here and here alone that they build temples and churches for the religions which have come with the object of condemning our own religion. This is one very great principle that the world is waiting to learn from us. Aye, you little know how much of intolerance is yet abroad. It

struck me more than once, that I should have to leave my bones on foreign shores owing to the prevalence of religious intolerance. Killing a man is nothing for religion's sake; tomorrow they may do it in the very heart of the boasted civilization of the West, if today they are not really doing so.

Therefore the world is waiting for this grand idea of universal toleration. It will be a great acquisition to civilization. Nay, no civilization can long exist unless this idea enters into it. No civilization can grow unless fanaticism, bloodshed and brutality stop. No civilization can begin to lift up its head until we look charitably upon one another, and the first step towards that much needed charity is to look charitably and kindly upon the religious convictions of others. Nay more, to understand that not only should we be charitable, but positively helpful to each other, however different our religious ideas and convictions may be. And that is exactly what we do in India, as I have just related to you, and we will and must go on until we conquer through love, until we have demonstrated to the world that love alone is the fittest thing to survive and not hatred, that it is gentleness that has the strength to live on and to fructify, and not mere brutality and physical force.

The other great idea that the world wants from us today, the thinking part of Europe, nay, the whole world—more, perhaps, the lower classes than the higher, more the masses than the cultured, more the ignorant than the educated, more the weak than the strong—is that eternal grand idea of the spiritual oneness of the whole universe. I need not tell today, men from the Madras University, how the modern researches of the West have demonstrated through physical means, the oneness and the soli-

darity of the whole universe! how physically speaking, you and I, the sun, moon and stars are but little waves or wavelets in the midst of an infinite ocean of matter; how Indian psychology demonstrated ages ago that, similarly, both body and mind are but mere names or little wavelets in the ocean of matter, the *Samashti,* and how, going one step further, it is also shown in the Vedanta that behind that idea of the unity of the whole show, the real Soul is one. There is but one Soul throughout the universe, all is but One Existence. This great idea of the real and basic solidarity of the whole universe has frightened many, even in this country; it even now finds sometimes more opponents than adherents; I tell you, nevertheless, that it is the one great life-giving idea which the world wants from us today, and which the mute masses of India want for their uplifting, for none can regenerate this land of ours without the practical application and effective operation of this ideal of the oneness of things.

The rational West is earnestly bent upon seeking out the rationality, the *raison d'etre* of all its philosophy and its ethics; and you all know well that ethics cannot be derived from the mere sanction of any personage, however great and divine he may have been. Such an explanation of the authority of ethics appeals no more to the highest of the world's thinkers. They want something more than human sanction for ethical and moral codes to be binding; they want some eternal principle of truth as the sanction of ethics. And where is that eternal sanction to be found except in the only Infinite Reality, that exists in you and in me and in all, in the Self, in the Soul? The infinite oneness of the Soul is the eternal sanction of all morality, that you and I are not only brothers—every literature voicing man's struggle toward freedom has preached that

for you—but that you and I are really one. This is the dictate of Indian philosophy. This oneness is the rationale of all ethics and all spirituality. Europe wants it today just as much as our down-trodden masses do, and this great principle is even now unconsciously forming the basis of all the latest political and social aspirations that are coming up in England, in Germany, in France and in America. And mark it, my friends, that in and through all the literature voicing man's struggle towards freedom, towards universal freedom, again and again you find the Indian Vedantic ideals coming out prominently. In some cases the writers do not know the source of their inspiration, in some cases they try to appear very original, and a few there are, bold and grateful enough to mention the source and acknowledge their indebtedness to it.

There is not one system in India which does not hold the doctrine that God is within, that Divinity resides within all things. Every one of our Vedantic systems admits that all purity and perfection and strength are in the Soul already. According to some, this perfection sometimes becomes, as it were, contracted, and at other times it becomes expanded again. Yet it is there. According to the *Advaita*, it neither contracts nor expands, but becomes hidden and uncovered, now and again. Pretty much the same thing in effect. The one may be a more logical statement than the other, but as to the result, the practical conclusions, both are about the same; and this is the one central idea which the world stands in need of, and nowhere is the want more felt than in this, our own motherland.

Let every man and woman and child, without respect of caste or birth, weakness or strength, hear and learn that behind the strong and the weak, behind the high and

the low, behind everyone, there is that Infinite Soul, assuring the infinite possibility and the infinite capacity of all to become great and good. Let us proclaim to every soul: Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached. Arise, awake from this hypnotism of weakness. *None* is really weak; the soul is infinite, omnipotent, and omniscient. Stand up, assert yourself, proclaim the God within you, do not deny Him! Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity. Aye, if there is anything in the *Gita* that I like, it is these two verses, coming out strong as the very gist, the very essence, of Krishna's teaching—"He who sees the Supreme Lord dwelling alike in all beings, the Imperishable in things that perish, he sees indeed. For seeing the Lord as the same, everywhere present, he does not destroy the Self by the self, and thus he goes to the highest goal".

Thus there is a great opening for the Vedanta to do beneficent work both here and elsewhere. This wonderful idea of the sameness and omnipresence of the Supreme Soul has to be preached for the amelioration and elevation of the human race, here as elsewhere. Wherever there is evil and wherever there is ignorance and want of knowledge, I have found out by experience that all evil comes, as our scriptures say, relying upon differences, and that all good comes from faith in equality, in the underlying sameness and oneness of things. This is the great Vedantic ideal. To have the ideal is one thing, and to apply it practically to the details of daily life is quite another thing. It is very good to point out an ideal, but where is the practical way to reach it? It is love and love alone that I preach, and I base my teaching on the great

Vedantic truth of the sameness and omnipresence of the Soul of the Universe.

How are these things to be brought about? I must again draw your attention to the fact that cursing and vilifying and abusing do not and cannot produce anything good. They have been tried for years and years, and no valuable result has been obtained. Good results can be produced only through love, through sympathy.

Therefore utter no words of condemnation. Close your lips and let your hearts open. Work out the salvation of this land and of the whole world, each of you thinking that the entire burden is on his shoulders. Carry the light and the life of the Vedanta to every door, and rouse up the divinity that is hidden within every soul. Then, whatever may be the measure of your success, you will have this satisfaction that you have lived, worked and died for a great cause. In the success of this cause, howsoever brought about, is centered the salvation of humanity here and hereafter.

After all, Jesus, Buddha, Mahavir, Lao-tzu, Confucius and Francis of Assisi had neither arms, nor physical force, nor wealth, nor any of the worldly means for exerting influence upon millions and for determining the historical destinies of nations and cultures. Nor to obtain their power did they appeal to hate, envy, greed, and other selfish lusts of human beings . . . And yet, together with a handful of their followers, they reshaped the mind and behavior of untold millions, transformed cultures and social institutions and decisively conditioned the course of history. None of the greatest conquerors and revolutionary leaders can even remotely compete with these apostles of love . . . —*Pitirim A. Sorokin*

VEDANTA ON THE AIR

BROADCAST

by Sister Daya

(February 27, 1954)

SISTER DAYA: My friends, you who have listened to our former broadcasts on the spirit of Vedanta, are now perhaps asking this question:

"If ultimately all is one Absolute Being, and if all created things issue forth from that One, and return to that One again, and are ever contained in that One, then where do God and prayer come in? If we are to say: 'I am that Eternal', then to what or whom do we pray? To our own Self?"

We certainly do not pray to our little self; we pray to the one Being of the entire universe. So long as man thinks of himself as a separate personality, he must reach out in his prayers to the Divine Personality of God, and the Divine Personality of God responds. When his sense of ego completely dies away, however, when he becomes selfless, then his being becomes one with Infinite Being.

This question that has been asked is a natural question, and expresses a basic need of man's soul. In trying to answer it, we again come face to face with impenetrable mysteries. Let us seek to approach them simply; for after all, Truth is simple; it is the human mind that makes it appear complex. Philosophy is one thing; the hunger in man's heart another. Before man can know true peace, both heart and mind have to be satisfied.

The concept of absolute oneness gives us a mighty backdrop, as it were, against which the whole drama of creation is being played. Love, brotherhood, the irrepressible longing for union, find their explanation and true

meaning when seen against that oneness. What is love but oneness perceived through the veil of the many? The true lover can never be satisfied so long as there is even the least sense of separation. So it is also with God-love, God-worship. All worshippers, all seekers after the Divine, are struggling to be united with their Ideal. The great saints, the great mystics cry out: "O Lord, fill me with Thyself!" Swami Paramananda called this the greatest prayer that man can utter. "Thou art the Root of my being!" they cry, "the Life of my life!" The Christian saint, Catherine of Genoa, affirms: "The Me in me is God!"

Through uttermost renunciation of all that we feel is *not* of God, the distance which seems to lie between God and the human soul is bridged, and the lover, the love and the beloved become one. An Oriental mystic would put it this way: "The dewdrop slips into the shining sea!" In essence the dewdrop *is* the sea; it is an infinitesimal sea; yet isolated and apart, it is *not* the sea. Drawn ever onward by something greater than itself, it is vaguely aware of an immensity toward which it moves. When it slips into the sea it becomes that immensity. So it is with the human soul. Life absorbed into life can never become death; Being absorbed into greater Being can never become non-being. An ancient Hindu scripture tells us: "The knower of *Brahman*, the Absolute, becomes *Brahman*."

Thus in the vast cosmic plan there is place for both the knower and the worshipper. Our mind stands far ahead of our realization. For countless lives we may repeat, "All is One! I and my brother are one!" and yet go on living, conscious only of the many. We move among fragments of a shattered universe, and desperately reach out for our friend, for our brother, for our God. The more separated

we are, the more we feel we are in chaos. The more united we are, the more we realize cosmos. All that draws us into one, makes for cosmos; all that drives us farther apart makes for chaos. Cosmos is love; chaos is hatred. The moral nature and all virtues are born from our sense of oneness; separateness is the root of all evil. The culmination of separateness is where a man injures or kills his fellow man. The final act of oneness is where a man lays down his life for his fellow man.

Throughout the ages, master spirits have both approached God from without and realized Him within. The one experience leads to the other. We see in the life of Christ how at one moment He cried, "Father, if it be possible, remove this cup from my lips!" and at another moment declared, "I and my Father are One!"

Of this be sure, we cannot aspire for something that is not already in our heart. Pascal, the great French savant, says, "Thou wouldst not have sought Me if thou hadst not already found Me." We cannot conceive of a glory that we do not inherently possess. Out of the divinity in man, man's faith in divinity is born. Swami Vivekananda has said: "Faith is more than belief; it is ultimate vision." And so we are told: "Become what you are!" Sri Ramakrishna used to say: "When a man gets a thorn in his hand, he takes another thorn to remove it and then he throws both thorns away." So when we are pierced by the thorn of separateness, we take the thorn of God to remove it, and then, realizing oneness, we throw both thorns away.

I have already spoken of Sri Ramakrishna, the mighty God-illumined spirit who only a few short years ago proclaimed not only to India but to the whole world, the oneness of all life, the oneness of humanity, the oneness

talk, he read poems, and Gayatri Devi related some of her personal experiences with the poet and sang in Bengali. A tape recording of Tagore's songs was played. A reception followed the Service.

Srimati Gayatri Devi was invited to speak, on Monday, May 2nd, at the Boston University before the undergraduate class studying contemporary religions. Her theme was *What is Vedanta?* A second outside lecture on *India* was given at the Cohasset school for the benefit of the fourth graders, one of whom is a frequent visitor to the Ashrama. The meeting proved to be an event for the mothers and teachers as well, to whom India is a strange and unknown country.

VEDANTA SOCIETY OF FRANKFORT A M., GERMANY

From May 7th until the 27th Gayatri Devi was the guest of *Deutche Vedanta-Gesellschaft* which was formed in 1952 and given legal status in the summer of 1955. Under its auspices, with Dr. Gunter Zuhlsdorf as its acting leader, Gayatri Devi held several Services in Frankfurt and delivered lectures there as well as in Heidelberg and Stuttgart. A further report of these activities will be given in the next issue.

Srimati Gayatri Devi was in Stockholm, Sweden, during the last days of May enjoying the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. T. Angstrom who recently visited the Ashramas in Cohasset and La Crescenta. Informal meetings and religious Services were held in their home where friends and devotees of Vedanta came together. Gayatri Devi remained in Sweden until the 3rd of June when, via London, she flew back to the U.S.A. to resume all the Services and Classes in Boston and Cohasset. On the four Sundays of her absence the following Services were held: May 8th Mrs. Dana M. Greeley spoke on *Unitarianism;*

May 15th, Dr. Amiya Chakravarty on *Message of Gautama Buddha;* May 22nd, Raphael P. Boruchoff, *Judaism;* May 29th, Prof. Newlin Smith, *Faith of the Quakers.* The Centre is most grateful to each of these friends for his enlightening discussion. The Thursday class on the *Bhagavad-Gita* was discontinued for the month of May.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

California's spring has been a very capricious one, but Easter day, April 10th, dawned bright and warm and the beneficent spirit of the Christ seemed almost tangible to the many who came to share in the day's worship and festivity. The first Service was the much loved Sunrise Service held in the Temple Patio amid a profuse offering of flowers. Many bird calls, the sound of the little water fall, the roaring of the fire, plus the voices of Sister Vimala and Carl Damkilde made a beautiful prelude and setting for Sister Daya's inspiring sermon. Following the Service Sister Seva served a welcome breakfast to nearly a hundred of the early risers. At 11 o'clock in the Temple another Service was conducted by Sister Daya who spoke on *Where Shall We Find Christ?* with Carl Damkilde again adding his voice to the worship. Luncheon was served to a large and happy crowd at the Community House and at 3:15 p.m. Sister Daya conducted the final Service of the day, her theme being *The Com-Passion of Christ.* Preceding Easter, a meditation and reading from the Scriptures on the night of Holy Thursday and the usual Good Friday Silence and public Service prepared all hearts for the joyous festival to follow.

On May 1st many friends gathered at the Ashrama to help celebrate its 32nd birthday. The usual two public Services were held and Sister Daya spoke of life at the

Ashrama, under Swami Paramananda, and of the ideals for which it stands. Miss Adrienne Aye sang beautifully. In the afternoon several friends paid moving tribute.

Though the California Ashrama did not have the regular celebration of Lord Buddha's birthday, May 15th was set aside to honor him.

Wednesday night, June 1st, the Community House was the scene of another fine recital presented by Mr. Gregory Bemko, cellist and Ashrama's resident, Rudolph Gruen, composer-pianist.

Vivekananda Memorial Lectures

On Wednesday, April 20th, the Ambassador from India, Mr. G. L. Mehta inaugurated, at Mendel Hall, University of Chicago, the Vivekananda Memorial Lecture Series, which in cooperation with the Taraknath Das Foundation aims "to acquaint the people of the United States with the cultural heritage of India and to promote better understanding between the two countries." In his address, delivered before a distinguished gathering of Chicago educationalists, the Ambassador reviewed the political, social and economic circumstances in which the Swami lived and worked, and assessed his contribution toward the awakening of modern India. "If the gods had spared Vivekananda to live the full span of his life (he died at the young age of thirty-nine)," Mr. Mehta concluded, "he would have contributed still more to the cultural renaissance of his country and to the spiritual regeneration of mankind."

It is indeed fitting that these lectures should be given in Chicago, the scene of the Swami's first triumph in America. May they help to spread his living word.

NOTE: *Disciple's Notebook* will continue in the next issue.